ABSTRACT

A method for recovering from malfunctions in a primary agent module of a modular network device. The primary agent module is installed in a modular network device having a number of network interface modules housed in a chassis. A backup agent module is installed in the chassis when the modular network device is powered on. The backup agent module determines if the primary agent module has been installed when three dedicated signals of the primary agent module are asserted. The network device then synchronizes all configuration information of the network interface modules from the primary to the backup agent module. The backup agent module detects that the primary agent module has failed if it cannot receive a message sent from the primary agent module within a predetermined time interval. As a result, the modular network device is rebooted and the backup agent module becomes the primary agent module.